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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

January 13, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
Office of the Speaker
232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Nancy:

I am writing to respectfully request that you move the Global Online Freedom Act (GOFA), HR 2271, to the full committee for mark-up. As you know, this legislation is substantially similar to the bill that was passed by three committees in the 111th Congress.

I remember and deeply appreciate the participation of many members from both sides of the aisle in the 8-hour hearing I chaired in 2006, *"The Internet in China: A Tool for Freedom or Suppression?"* The hearing—followed by two more—had an impact on the industry as well as the former administration, which established a Global Internet Freedom Task Force (GIFT) at the Department of State.

However, Google's announcement that it will withdraw from China is powerful evidence that the situation has worsened. Google's laudable action shows that companies, without the support of US law, cannot reform dictatorships. Legislation is desperately needed to stop US companies from working hand-in-glove with dictatorships attempting to crack down on democratic activists who use the Internet. From the meager results of GIFT and attempts of Internet technology companies to change the Internet restrictive policies of many countries, including China and Iran, we know that GOFA, which was drafted with the assistance of the most knowledgeable human rights NGOs and Internet freedom experts, is crucial to promoting freedom of expression in repressive countries. Moreover, GOFA has been endorsed by many human rights organizations, including Reporters Without Borders, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch.

I know you share my commitment to prevent repressive countries from partnering with American companies to more effectively persecute dissidents. To ensure that these goals are met, I respectfully request that you schedule for mark-up the Global Online Freedom Act, HR 2271. If you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

enclosures

cc: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Chairman Howard Berman